

Mr. Speaker, Iran already possesses chemical weapons and is intensely working toward acquiring biological and nuclear weapons capability. These are dangerous trends, Mr. Speaker, and the United States must take action to stop these developments.

What is troubling is that technology and expertise has come to Iran from foreign companies, primarily, but not exclusively, Russian companies. In previous years, China and North Korea provided this assistance; today, Russian companies are providing highly advanced technology. In fact, Mr. Speaker, U.S. military intelligence reports, reports that have been publicly cited, have indicated that Russian entities signed contracts this year to help produce liquid-fueled ballistics missiles, such as the SS-4.

In addition, there have been sales of Russian high technology laser equipment and negotiations between the Russians and Iran for other supplies for the manufacture of missiles as well as the construction of the wind tunnels necessary to test the missiles.

Mr. Speaker, some 9,000 scientists, engineers and technicians from the former Soviet Union are currently in Iran as advisors. Some of these experts are teaching subjects ranging from missile guidance systems to firing circuitry and pyrotechnics of explosive systems. Others are aiding in the rebuilding of the Bushehr nuclear reactor, and the technical advice being given in this project could very well enhance Iran's capability to develop nuclear weapons.

Mr. Speaker, this flow of technology and expertise continues, in spite of the fact that in January of this year, then Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin issued a decree to restrict the export of dual-use technology. In addition, Russia is a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime, a volunteer arrangement among countries which share a common interest in arresting missile proliferation. Russia along with the 27 other signatory countries, which includes the United States, has agreed to participate in a regime which consists of common export guidelines applied to a common list of controlled items. But, Mr. Speaker, in spite of Russia's international commitments, Russian entities continue to provide this deadly technology to Iran.

So what is to be done, Mr. Speaker? There are currently sanction requirements in place for those companies which engage in this type of technology transfer. The Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act of 1992 requires the President to sanction the governments of those countries who knowingly supply Iran or Iraq with advanced conventional weaponry or technology that contributes to their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. These sanctions would suspend U.S. assistance to these governments, would suspend codevelopment and coproduction agreements, and would suspend military and dual-use technology agree-

ments that might lead to the transfer of technology or weapons to either Iran or Iraq.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Arms Export Control Act and the Export Administration Act both require the imposition of sanctions on governments and entities that violate the Missile Technology Control Regime. Unfortunately, the administration has chosen not to apply the sanctions available in existing law, choosing rather to pursue diplomatic solutions. But, Mr. Speaker, it appears these diplomatic solutions have not cut off the flow of these dangerous technologies to a nation with whom we do not have diplomatic relations.

H.R. 2709 was introduced last fall to press for an end to Russian missile cooperation with Iran. The legislation would sanction any company involved in providing missile technology to Iran. These sanctions should provide the United States with a means to attack the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and, while we might find ourselves standing alone in this fight, it is a worthy stand for us to take. The Congress is on record as supporting this legislation. The bill has 271 cosponsors in the House and 82 cosponsors in the Senate, and passed both houses by an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

Mr. Speaker, if we stand alone in our willingness to stop the spread of death and destruction in the Middle East, then so be it. Our stand is morally correct and the administration should join with the Congress in supporting the imposition of sanctions on those who put financial gain ahead of peace.

SUPPORT FOR THE IRAN MISSILE PROLIFERATION SANCTIONS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the comments of my colleagues, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), and to urge the President to sign legislation that would impose sanctions on those entities that are helping Iran develop ballistic missiles. Ballistic missiles in the hands of the government in Tehran would be destabilizing to the entire Middle East. We do not need to provide assistance to those companies that are assisting this ballistic missile program.

We should seek a rapprochement with the people of Iran. We should look at the recent elections in which a relative moderate, and I emphasize the word relative moderate, was elected President and exercises some authority within the government of Iran. The people of Iran, though, do not benefit from ballistic missiles. Ballistic missiles are not an essential element of the economic development of Iran. Ballistic missiles would simply give the

Iranian Government an opportunity to create mischief and death in the entire Middle East area.

The President should welcome the most recent legislation, not as an interference, but rather as a bolstering of his own policies, to control ballistic missile technology.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to sign the legislation, and I associate myself with the comments of my colleagues.

DISASTER FACING AGRICULTURE BASE OF NORTH DAKOTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, a year ago Grand Forks, North Dakota, was ravaged by flooding waters from the Red River. The eyes of the Nation watched with horror as this city of 50,000 suffered not just a devastating flooding event, but, in the middle of all else, fires began in the downtown that ravaged 11 of the major buildings in downtown Grand Forks as well. The attention of this body was focused on that event, and the assistance resulting in the disaster supplemental appropriations bill really played a very critical role in our ability to begin the rebuilding process, a process that continues even today.

Today I take the floor to tell you of another disaster, a disaster that, at least as far as North Dakota is concerned, is every bit as threatening, every bit as devastating, every bit as disastrous as the Grand Forks flood. But this disaster, chances are you will have never heard of, not seen a second of television footage, and be utterly unaware it is occurring. This is a stealth disaster, and it is a disaster facing the agriculture base of the State of North Dakota.

This chart tells the story, just as clearly as this story can be told. The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that in 1996, the net farm income in North Dakota totaled \$764 million. One year later, that total had fallen to \$15 million net farm income for the entire State, a drop of 98 percent.

The average North Dakota producer lost \$23,000 last year, and the average North Dakota producer is, by the way, a family farm, relatively modest in income levels, even in the best of years; a loss of \$23,000 last year. Across the State, those making loans available to farmers report that 80 of the borrowers lost money last year.

This disaster is the stealth disaster. Hopefully the remarks of my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE), the remarks I am making, and our ongoing effort will make it less of a stealth disaster in the weeks to come, but its depth and its consequences are as serious as I could possibly begin to tell you.

One of the consequences inevitably of the kind of economic results I have